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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. KONSTANTIN GAVRILOV, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1069th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

7 February 2024

**On the adoption of the agenda for the 1069th Plenary Meeting of the
OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation**

Mr. Chairperson,

In accordance with paragraph IV.1(C)4 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, the delegation of the Russian Federation hereby informs you about the lack of consensus with regard to the adoption of the agenda for the 1069th Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC).

Let me begin by saying that we obviously share the view of the Chairmanship of the Republic of Cyprus regarding the importance of the FSC as a platform for substantive dialogue in times of crisis. This attitude was clearly reflected in the statement at the opening of the FSC winter session on 17 January by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Mr. Constantinos Kombos, who called upon the OSCE participating States, in a spirit of collective responsibility, to “exert all efforts to stand up for our values and preserve the effective functioning of our Organization, in full respect of the UN Charter and the OSCE principles and commitments”.

It is hard to disagree with this message. After all, over the past two years, the FSC has been seriously deformed, if not completely degraded, by the reckless behaviour of a number of Western participating States, first and foremost NATO members, who are turning this platform exclusively into a political battleground with Russia.

With deep regret we note a discrepancy between the approach by the FSC Chairmanship in preparing for today’s plenary meeting and the statements made at the beginning of this session.

We know that the NATO wing of the Forum is subjecting its Cypriot colleagues to unprecedented pressure, thus putting them in a very unenviable position. Their aim is to subjugate the FSC and monopolize the right to determine the content of the agenda for plenary meetings. The irony is that we are talking about States that call themselves a “flowering garden” but in reality draw a cynical line in the spirit of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” This

fits well within the framework of their invented “rules-based order”, designed to contain independent States by flagrantly illegitimate measures.

It was at the instigation of a number of NATO States that during 2023 the rotating FSC Chairmanships discriminated against the Russian Federation and twice responded by refusing our legitimate requests to include high-level representatives of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Russian Foreign Ministry among the expert panellists under the agenda item “Security Dialogue”. Russia regards these actions as unacceptable attempts to censor a regional organization and a participating State that was at the origin of the Helsinki process and the creation of the OSCE itself.

We should particularly like to note that the Russian delegation has taken into account the wishes of the previous Chairmanship and a number of delegations in a constructive spirit by proposing for today’s meeting on international humanitarian law a recognized legal expert, Mr. Anton Mazur, who headed our delegation from 2011 to 2020 and currently holds the post of Deputy Director of the Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. We would like to emphasize in addition that the Cypriot Chairmanship was aware of our application at least one month before the start of its Chairmanship, but still rejected it under the pretext that the list of speakers had already been agreed upon. When was this? In June last year? By and between whom was it agreed?

We strongly disagree with this underhand step, which marks a clear and flagrant departure from the principles of mutual respect and co-operation within the OSCE. If it is the right of the Chairmanship to propose the agenda and put together a pool of speakers at a given meeting, then it is our right to agree or object to the integral agenda that is proposed for adoption.

Mr. Chairperson,

What has happened fits into the tried and tested practice of your predecessors in the Chairmanship of infringing the rights of a particular country, which is a flagrant violation of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, this step runs counter to the following fundamental OSCE documents adopted at the level of our Heads of State or Government:

- The Helsinki Final Act (1975), which also reaffirms the principle of the sovereign equality of States;
- The Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), according to which relations between OSCE participating States should be based on mutual respect and co-operation;
- The CSCE Helsinki Document (1992), whose section on the FSC emphasizes the equality of rights and equal respect for the security interests of all CSCE countries;
- The OSCE Lisbon Document (1996), under which participating States reaffirmed the goal of realizing the vision of a co-operative future by creating a common security space in which all States are equal partners;
- The OSCE Istanbul Document (1999), which calls for building relations in conformity with the concept of equal, common and comprehensive security guided by equal partnership;
- Finally, the Astana Commemorative Declaration (2010), which refers to the development of security dialogue based, *inter alia*, on the principles of equality and inclusiveness.

It goes without saying that the FSC leadership should act in accordance with the aforementioned approaches agreed upon by consensus. However, through outside influences, Mr. Chairperson, you have overstepped the mark. This needs to be corrected. In that connection, we are submitting in advance for consideration by the future Croatian Chairmanship (from April to August this year) a request to include Russian representatives in the list of keynote speakers on international humanitarian law and United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. We trust that the authorities in Zagreb will take into account the mistakes of their predecessors and reflect in their programme of work the entire spectrum of opinions present in the OSCE area – from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

In the event of a repetition of discriminatory actions against our country, we will be forced to take proportionate countermeasures until the balance of rights of OSCE participating States is restored.

On a separate note, like many colleagues in this room, we are deeply disappointed that today we will not be able to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the reaching of agreement on the FSC's defining document, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. In that context, we call upon the Cypriot Chairmanship to open consultations on the organization of the Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct, which has been obstructed by the "Anglo-Saxon" delegations behind the scenes for two consecutive years. We are ready to join the consensus about holding it. We shall see whether our interlocutors are able to move away from covert games in favour of real diplomacy.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, we once again express our profound regret at the decision you have made. Taken together, all the aspects brought up mean that the necessary conditions are not in place for the Russian delegation to join a consensus regarding the entire meeting agenda, including the item "General statements".

We trust that in future we will be able to retain the traditional format for holding Forum meetings while taking into account objectively the interests and opinions of all participating States without exception, in accordance with the FSC's politico-military mandate. For our part, we are ready to make efforts to facilitate meaningful and inclusive dialogue on current security issues in the OSCE area.

Thank you for your attention.